

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 179680

NODIS
FOR ATHERTON AND SAUNDERS

FOLLOWING REPEAT 17108 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO TEL AVIV
15 JUL 78

QUOTE S E C R E T CAIRO 17108

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV EG IS
SUBJECT: LONDON TALKS--MAHER'S COMMENTS ON OUR
- PROPOSED SCENARIO

1. AHMED MAHER SHOWED UP AT FRENCH NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION LAST EVENING. HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM AUSTRIA WITH SADAT AND KAMEL. HE SAID KAMEL HAD SEEN OUR PROPOSED SCENARIO FOR THE LONDON TALKS AS SENT TO THE PRESIDENT BY MUBARAK. ACCORDING TO MAHER, KAMEL IS NOT VERY HAPPY ABOUT SEVERAL POINTS.

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2. FIRST, KAMEL IS CONCERNED THAT BEFORE THE LONDON TALKS ARE EVEN UNDERWAY, WE AND THE ISRAELIS ARE ALREADY SPEAKING PUBLICLY ABOUT A FOLLOW-ON MEETING AT AL-ARISH. KAMEL THOUGHT WE HAD ASKED FOR A SINGLE RENEWAL OF DIRECT TALKS, NOT FOR A SERIES OF SUCH MEETINGS. I REMINDED MAHER THAT WE HAVE NEVER TALKED ABOUT RENEWAL OF DIRECT TALKS AS LIMITED TO A SINGLE MEETING. THERE CLEARLY HAS

TO BE AN ON-GOING NEGOTIATING PROCESS IF WE ARE GOING TO BE ABLE ACTIVELY TO PARTICIPATE. THE AL-ARISH SUGGESTION, AS MAHER KNEW, CAME FROM PRESIDENT SADAT HIMSELF. THUS WE SEE OUR PROPOSED SCENARIO AS CONSISTENT WITH SADAT'S COMMENTS MADE TO VP MONDALE. IN ANY EVENT, SINCE BOTH SADAT AND KAMEL ARE ANXIOUS THAT WE CLEAR WITH THEM IN ADVANCE ANY USG SUGGESTIONS, A PERIOD OF TIME IS NEEDED AFTER THE LONDON TALKS TO ALLOW THIS TO TAKE PLACE. AS MAHER KNEW FROM OUR PROPOSED SCENARIO, ATHERTON WILL VISIT THE AREA AFTER THE LONDON TALKS FOR THIS PURPOSE, BUT WE NEED TO PRESENT ANY SUGGESTIONS WE MAY HAVE IN AN ACTIVE NEGOTIATING CONTEXT. THIS UNDERSCORES THE NEED FOR A FOLLOW-ON MEETING. MAHER AGAIN NOTED THAT NONE OF THESE "CONDITIONS" HAD COME UP WHEN WE WERE READY TO PRESENT OUR "PROPOSAL" IN MID-MAY. I SAID THESE ARE NOT "CONDITIONS", BUT REFLECT OUR BEST ESTIMATE OF HOW WE SHOULD PROCEED, HAVING IN MIND POTENTIAL DOMESTIC AND ISRAELI CRITICISM OF ANY MORE DIRECT USG INVOLVEMENT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

3. MAHER SAID KAMEL IS ALSO UNHAPPY THAT WE ARE SUGGESTING THE EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL BE THE FIRST TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE LONDON TALKS. THIS, AS KAMEL SEES IT (QUOTING MAHER), IS LIKELY TO MEAN THAT THE EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL WILL RECEIVE SHORT SHRIFT AND THAT THE MAIN FOCUS WILL BE ON BEGIN'S SELF-RULE PLAN.
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THE LATTER IS A NON-STARTER AS FAR AS GOE IS CONCERNED. THE ISRAELI PLAN, KAMEL REPORTEDLY BELIEVES, WAS THE FIRST TO BE TABLED; HENCE IT, RATHER THAN THE EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL, SHOULD BE THE FIRST TO BE DISCUSSED.

4. WE HAD NO TIME TO PURSUE THE CONVERSATION SINCE I HAD BY THEN RECEIVED MESSAGE THAT MUBARAK'S OFFICE WISHED ME TO CALL. I SUBSEQUENTLY DID SO AND WAS TOLD THAT SADAT WANTS TO SEE ME AT 1200 NOON TODAY IN ALEXANDRIA. STILL LATER, IN A TELECON WITH MAHER, HE TOLD ME THAT KAMEL HAS ALSO BEEN ASKED BY SADAT TO BE AT OUR MEETING. WE WILL HAVE TO SEE HOW STRONGLY KAMEL FEELS ABOUT ABOVE ITEMS.

5. WILL REPORT MY TALK WITH SADAT AND KAMEL LATER TODAY. EILTS

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

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